

REMARKS

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 18, 51-53, 59-62, 75-77 and 83-86 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(c) as allegedly being anticipated by Shiobara *et al.* (US Patent No. 6,376,100). The Examiner rejected claims 1, 14, 18, 41, 43, 44, 46, 51-54, 58-62, 75-78, 82-88, 90-94, and 96-98 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Christie *et al.* (US Patent No. 5,668,059) and Johansson *et al.* (US Patent No. 6,090,474) in view of Shiobara *et al.* (US Patent No. 6,376,100).

The Examiner rejected claims 89 and 95 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over the references as applied to the claims hereinabove, and further in view of CAPLUS accession no. 1997:713725 for the Materials Research Society Symposium Proceedings article by Shi *et al.*

In a telephonic interview on February 14, 2006, the Examiner and Applicants' representative reached agreement that none of the applied prior art discloses the blend of a first flexibilizer and a thermoplastic as recited in claims 54 and 78, and that the insertion of the limitations of claims 54 and 78 into independent claims 1 and 41, respectively, along with cancellation of claims 54 and 78 as well as non-elected claims 54, 56, 57, 78, 80, and 81, would place the claims in condition for allowance.

Accordingly, Applicants have amended the claims to insert the limitations of claims 54 and 78 into independent claims 1 and 41, respectively. In addition, Applicants have cancelled claims 54 and 78 as well as non-elected claims 54, 56, 57, 78, 80, and 81.

In addition, Applicants have amended claims 88 and 94 to depend from claims 1 and 41,

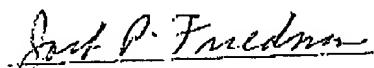
respectively.

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CONCLUSION

Based on the preceding arguments, Applicants respectfully believe that all pending claims and the entire application meet the acceptance criteria for allowance and therefore request favorable action. If the Examiner believes that anything further would be helpful to place the application in better condition for allowance, Applicants invites the Examiner to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number listed below. The Director is hereby authorized to charge and/or credit Deposit Account No. 09-0457.

Date: 02/28/2006
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